



The Pileup

Newsletter of the CDXA

Midway Island to be "On the Air" Again

(From the ARRL website --Jan. 27, 2009)

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced on Monday, January 26 that they would once again allow Amateur Radio operators the opportunity to operate from Midway Atoll <<http://www.fws.gov/midway/>>. See also: <http://www.arrl.org/news/files/AmateurRadionOperation_MidwayAtoll.pdf>

This is the first time that USFWS has allowed amateurs to operate from the wildlife refuge since 2002. The USFWS started a program earlier this month to encourage visitors to experience Midway's wildlife, history and culture, as well as non-wildlife-dependent activities—including Amateur Radio.

To ensure the safety of the wildlife on the Refuge, the USFWS said that Amateur Radio operations will be permitted for two weeks only, from October 5-19, 2009. "Radio operation will be allowed only within a designated area on the north side of Sand Island and the use of portable generators will not be permitted," said Midway Atoll Refuge Manager Matt D. Brown. "There is 120 V. power available at the operation site. Any modifications to the island power grid/infrastructure must be approved in advance

| | | |
|--------|----------------|-------------------------|
| W4VHF | Ted Goldthorpe | President |
| AD4IE | Paul Ponak | Vice-Pres. |
| W3ZL | Cliff Wagoner | Sec.-Treas. |
| K4MD | Joe Simpkins | Cluster Mgr. |
| W3OA | Dick Williams | Contest Mgr. |
| W3GQ | Paul Sturpe | Cluster Mgr.-North Area |
| WB4BXW | Wayne Setzer | Webmaster |
| K8YC | John Scott | Editor |

and be paid for entirely by the radio operators." All participants will be required to attend a refuge orientation shortly after arrival that is designed to enhance visitor safety, wildlife protection and overall enjoyment of the wildlife refuge.

"Although determined to be a wildlife-compatible activity," Brown said, "this [Amateur Radio] opportunity is being conducted on a trial basis." Brown has the authority to discontinue the activity at any time, based on wildlife protection and conservation goals. For more information, please contact Brown via e-mail <Matt_D_Brown@fws.gov> or by phone at 808-954-4818.

Travel arrangements to and from Midway are the responsibility of the individual or group. Since there are minimal facilities on the atoll, Brown said that lodging availability is very limited and will be on a first-come, first-served basis. "All Amateur Radio operators on Midway must secure lodging reservations, as camping is not permitted," Brown said. To make reservations, please contact Chugach Industries' Site Administrator Darlene Holst via e-mail

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| CDXA PacketCluster & Other Communication Systems | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| W4DXA (11 mi. NE of Mooresville) | 144.93 MHz (1200 bits/second) | 441.00 MHz (9600 bits/second) |
| K4MD Charlotte, NC | 144.91 MHz (1200 bits/second) | Not Available on 9600 bits/second |
| NA4L (Near Hillsdale, VA) | 144.95 MHz (1200 bits/second) | Connect to NA4L ("C NA4L") |
| K4MD (AR Cluster via Telnet) | | k4md.no-ip.com |
| CDXA Repeater 147.18 MHz (+600) | | W4DXA, Near Fort Mill, SC |
| World Wide Web Homepage | | www.cdx.org |
| Wednesday Luncheon (11:30 AM) | | Murphy's Food and Spirits, 131 E. Woodlawn Road, Charlotte, NC |

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<mailto:dholst@chugach-ak.com> or by phone at 808-954-4801.

Midway is located in the North Pacific Ocean (near the northwestern end of the Hawaiian archipelago)—approximately 1250 miles northwest of Honolulu—about one-third of the way between Honolulu and Tokyo. At less than 150 miles east of the International Dateline, Midway Atoll is truly "midway" around the world from the Greenwich meridian. The atoll is an unincorporated territory of the United States and is the only atoll/island in the Hawaiian archipelago not part of the State of Hawaii. Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge is owned and administered by the USFWS on behalf of the American people and has international significance for both its historic and natural resources.

In 1988, Midway became a National Wildlife Refuge, at the time subject to the primary jurisdiction of the Navy. In 1993, the Navy decided to close the Naval Air Facility after more than 50 years of continuous operation. On May 20, 1996, custody and accountability for Midway Atoll transferred from the Department of the Navy to the Department of the Interior. President Clinton signed Executive Order 13022 on October 31, 1996, effectively superseding earlier orders assigning responsibility for Midway to the Navy. A new code of regulations governing activities at Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge was published in the Federal Register on March 10, 1998.

When Midway became a national wildlife refuge, it joined a network of more than 500 separate units of the National Wildlife Refuge System, encompassing nearly 93 million acres, throughout all 50 states and several

territories and possessions. Refuges represent the only Federal lands set aside and managed principally for the conservation of fish and wildlife.

(There is at least one group already making plans to operate from Midway Island. -The Editor)

Triple Play Award is getting a good "Play"

I'm sure the leadership at ARRL hoped the new Triple Play award would stir some excitement in the amateur radio community, but I don't think they had any idea just how much "play" the Triple Play award would stimulate. In case you missed the rules rundown in the January issue of the *Pileup*, the gist of this award is to work all States of the United States using each of Phone, CW, and digital modes, **AND** have them confirmed using Logbook of the World (LoTW).

In the first few weeks of January, the spotting clusters had lots of domestic spots with something about LoTW in the comment field. Also visible were the words "Triple Play" in some cluster comments. Although I didn't hear any of them, I was told there were even some nets formed to attract LoTW users who wanted to find the needed States. Then, on January 15, a remarkable event occurred. Certificate #1 of the Triple Play was issued. Yes, it took only 15 days of the new year for a station to work all 50 States on each of three modes and have them all confirmed using LoTW! The owner of Triple Play Certificate #1 is David Strout, W2YC.

As I prepared this article on the evening of January 30, I logged into LoTW to see how the Triple Play was progressing. Certificate #72 had been issued!

The Pileup

Official Newsletter of the Carolina DX Association
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Published monthly 10 times per year, excluding the months of June and December.

The purpose of the association is to secure for the members the pleasures and benefits of the association of persons having a common interest in Amateur Radio.

Members of the CDXA shall adhere to "The Amateur's Code" as published from time to time in *The ARRL Handbook for Radio Amateurs*, and shall consist of those valid licensed amateur operators having an interest in promoting amateur radio. Long distance communications (DX) is of special interest to members of the association, but said interest is not a requirement of membership.

Dues are \$30 per year for those using the PacketCluster maintained by the Association, \$15 otherwise, payable each December. Dues are payable by check to the Secretary/Treasurer:

Cliff Wagoner, W3ZL
P. O. Box 577
Davidson, NC 28036

Address, telephone, and email address changes should be directed to the Secretary/Treasurer at the above address or via email at: jcw53@cornell.edu.

Welcome New Members

January was a good month as regards the membership roll. One of the new members we welcome this month is **Harry Helms (N4HWH)** of Concord, NC. Also newly appearing on the membership roll this month is **Art Gillespie (K4TP)** of Gastonia, NC. Returning to the roll is **Thomas McAllister (WB4TLX)** of Catawba, NC. We hope we'll get to see these three at the CDXA booth at the Charlotte Hamfest coming up in March. To all of you, welcome to the Carolina DX Association.

You know you are a Ham WHEN.....

1. The only time you get up at 6am is for a contest or DXpedition.
2. You know you can run all your home appliances on your equipment back-up battery.
3. Someone in a music shop asks you what bands you like and you answer 160 meters and 20 meters.
4. A bank clerk asks you to spell your name and you do so phonetically.
5. In a phone conversation , you wait for the "OVER" on the other side, before speaking.
6. You hear a scraping sound when driving through multi-story parking decks.
7. A band opening is more important than a grand opening.
8. Sight-seeing on holiday amounts to looking at rooftops for antennas.
9. The radios in your car are worth more than your car.
10. As you walk out of the house you not only feel your pockets for your keys and your wallet, but also your hip for your handitalkie.
11. At your child's school conference the school-teacher asks you why your child identified countries on the world map as JA, ZL, VE, G, UA and XE.
12. You refer to your house as "Ohm, sweet Ohm".
13. You're talking on the telephone and end every sentence with "(callsign) this is (callsign), over".
14. Your prime criterion for a new car is that it have zero ignition noise as well as a rain gutter and somewhere to put at least one rig.
15. You and your "significant other" hike to the top of a famous mountain, but rather than enjoy the magnificent sunset and giving him/her a kiss, you fire up the handitalkie to see how many repeaters you can hit.
16. You realize that you've been studying code too long because you try to find out who did it in 'Inspector Morse' by listening to the background music.
17. You look at the Rocky Mountain Range and try to figure out how to get an antenna mounted on the highest peak.
18. You look at the Brooklyn Bridge and develop a plan to get it to resonate on 160 meters.

(This tidbit was provided by Fabrizio "Brix" Vedovelli (IN3ZNR) suggesting things related to amateur radio aren't too different in Italy! —The Editor)

Ten and Twenty Years Ago

(All the information to follow can be found in the archives of The PILEUP on the CDXA website.)

Twenty Years Ago:

CDXA's packet radio cluster was being supported by borrowed equipment, donations, and a volunteer effort. Yet it was being "found" by more and more members and utilization was on the rise Norfolk Island's Jim Smith (VK9NS) was moving around the South Pacific giving "new ones" to all who could work him Gliorioso Island was to be active for a month starting in May. (It isn't known whether it ever came alive, but things haven't changed even 20 years later!!)

Ten Years Ago:

In January, 1999 we found Bob Burton beginning his first year as President of CDXA and he was 38 years old—it's now ten years later and the "BIG FIVE-OH" is looming off in the distance for Bob. . . . Don Daso (K4ZA) gives a blow by blow recap of his effort in the recently completed 10 meter contest from N4ZC's QTH "Uncle Henry", N4UH, (now a SK) retold his unsuccessful efforts to work Pratis Island to restore himself to the Top of the DXCC Honor Roll, and this old pro knew all the tricks, except how to beat Mr. Murphy Palestine (E4) was to become a new DXCC Entity on February 1, 1999 ZL9CI DXpedition had just concluded with over 96,000 QSOs in the log Gary Dixon (K4MQG), a longtime DX friend of Jordan's King Hussein (JY1) recalled his trip to Jordan as a guest of King Hussein. The King had passed away only weeks before

The Infamous SL1M Has Been Found!

The day after the inauguration of President Obama, your editor received this note from Jim Morris:

Yesterday's news creeper on CNN stated the New York Times was receiving \$250 million dollars in assistance from Mexican Billionaire Carlos Slim. Could this be the celebrated Slim of yesterday?

73, Jim KQ4O

After raising his question, Jim did not indicate whether the news item went on to say just HOW Mr. Slim made his billions of dollars, but those of us in the Amateur Radio community now have a good idea of where all those "green stamps" and IRCs ended up.

Attention Contesters

CDXA is now Carolina DX Association

By Dick Williams, W3OA

Both the ARRL and CQ Contest Robots will now only recognize "Carolina DX Association" as our Club name in Cabrillo files.

Up until last year the CQ Robot would take many variations of our name and the ARRL Robot insisted on seeing "Carolina DX Assn". The ARRL would reject the log if we spelled out "Association" or added a period at the end of the abbreviation. This caused some members problems but wasn't too bad because at least both Robots would accept the same abbreviation. But last fall the CQ Robot got picky and wanted to see "Association" spelled out, rejecting the abbreviation. This change was not announced ahead of time and caused some logs, including mine, to be rejected before I could spread the word about the change.

So then we were in a situation where the two Robots were looking for different variations on our Club's name. A sure-fire source of confusion. It seemed to me that the best thing to do was ask the ARRL to change their Robot to act like CQ's Robot. I talked to some of the CDXA old timers and found no reason to stick with the abbreviation the ARRL Robot was looking for. I asked the ARRL Contesting Branch to make this change and they have now done so.

So from now on show your Club as "Carolina DX Association" (without the quotes) in the Cabrillo logs you send to the ARRL and CQ. Why not change it in your logging software right now so you won't forget to do this for the ARRL DX contests? I just did.

Skimmer Operation In ARRL CW Contest

By Dick Williams, W3OA

Our trial run with CW Skimmer in last fall's CQWW CW contest was fairly successful. My score and number of Q's went up 15 percent over last year for the same number of operating hours. Other users commented that having a large number of spots from a local Skimmer was a great help. So, we will do it again for the ARRL contest. But, with a few improvements.

In CQWW the Skimmer receiver was located at my QTH and used my transmitting antennas. Also, I am less than a mile, all over water, from the multi-op super station at W3GQ. Both of these factors adversely effect Skimmer's operation. The obvious solution was to move the Skimmer receiver to a "CW Free" zone, pref-

erably one with good antennas. Ken, K4DXA, volunteered the use of his QTH and antennas. So, for the ARRL contest the receiver will be at K4DXA, and we will use his Internet connection to get the spots to the telnet server at my QTH.

Another improvement will be to have the Skimmer rotate between bands automatically. It turns out that when Skimmer first starts listening to a band the great majority of spots are produced within the first few minutes. So I've written a program to automate band changes. For example, during the day Skimmer may monitor 20 meters for fifteen minutes, monitor 15 meters for ten minutes, monitor 10 meters for five minutes, and then repeat the cycle. (Details on the program can be seen at <http://home.roadrunner.com/~w3oa/SkimScan/>.)

To get the Skimmer spots just telnet to w3oa.no-ip.org. You can use the same software you currently use to get spots from K4MD and change the IP address to w3oa.no-ip.org (note the "dot org" at the end as opposed to the "dot com" at the end of K4MD's IP address). You will get both the spots from Skimmer and K4MD.

Skimmer will be running 24/7 from now until the contest is over. Last November's Pileup has more details, <http://cdxa.org/pileup/Archives/cdxa0811.pdf>. Send me an email if you have difficulties, w3oa@roadrunner.com.

ARRL DX Contest Starts Soon

CW Starts February 20
SSB Starts March 6

By Dick Williams, W3OA

Last year CDXA placed 3rd in ARRL's Medium Club Category with 43 entries and 11.3 million points. We will need another great effort to maintain that level of success. And, if we increase our scores by 25 percent we can move up to second place! That's why we are offering such great prizes. There are first place prizes in seven categories and participation prizes at the 1000 QSO, 500 QSO, and 250 QSO levels. The details are on page 3 of last month's Pileup <http://cdxa.org/pileup/Archives/cdxa0901.pdf>. Win a handsome trophy or a steak dinner!

The complete rules for the contest are at <http://www.arrl.org/contests/rules/2009/intlidx.html>. In a nutshell:

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- o Each contest starts at 7 p.m. Friday night and goes for 48 hours.
- o U.S. stations work as many DXCC entities as possible on 160, 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meters.
- o U.S. stations send a signal report and state. DX stations send a signal report and power.
- o Stateside stations get three points per DX QSO. (Canada isn't considered DX for this contest.)
- o Your multiplier is the sum of DXCC entities (except US and Canada) worked per band.
- o Your final score is your number of QSO points times your number of multipliers.

Here's a change from last year: Don't forget to show your Club name as "Carolina DX Association" (without the quotes) in the log you send to the ARRL. Another article in this Pileup explains the reason for the change.

CW Skimmer spots will be available for the CW Contest. Another article in this Pileup has the details.

Please send your score summary (number of QSOs, multiplier, final score) and entry category (single or multioperator, single band or all band, power level, with or without packet) to w3oa@roadrunner.com as soon as possible after each contest. Please tell me if you want a trophy or Outback card if you made over 1000 QSOs in the two contests combined. We will publish your scores on the CDXA web site as we receive them. Our intent is to award the prizes at the CDXA dinner on March 14 so I need all scores by March 9.

BLONDIE



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North Carolina QSO Party – Sunday, March 1

By Dick Williams, W3OA

CDXA won the North Carolina QSO Party in-state club competition in 2005, 2006, and 2007. Each of those three years we operated from the station at Discovery Place. We operated from there in 2008, too, but the combination of better competitors and equipment problems knocked us down to third place. That station is now closed for the Discovery Place remodeling so this year we will operate from Ron Bailey's QTH, AA4S. We are striving to get back into first place.

The contest runs from noon to 10 p.m. EST on Sunday, March 1. The complete rules are on the Internet at <http://www.w4nc.com/2009ncqsoparty.html>. It's important that we have a well-balanced effort between CW and SSB. If you are interested in joining our operation please contact me, Dick Williams (w3oa@roadrunner.com). Let me know what times you can be available and your preferred operating mode. Please do this by February 17 so we can finalize the operating schedule.

If you can't join us, please work W4DXA on as many band/modes as possible. The suggested frequencies are 3.540, 3.740, 7.040, 7.140, 14.040, 21.040, 21.140, 28.040, 28.140 for CW and 3.860, 7.260, 14.260, 21.360, 28.360 for SSB.

DX King News

Dick Williams, W3OA

Item 1: Here are the scores as of January 31 reported to me:

| <u>Call</u> | <u>Category</u> | <u>Countries</u> | <u>Zones</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|--------------|
| N4ZC | Unlimited | 180 | 40 | 220 |
| K4MQG | Unlimited | 166 | 37 | 203 |
| W3OA | Unlimited | 125 | 34 | 169 |
| W4HG | Unlimited | 97 | 27 | 124 |
| W3GQ | Unlimited | 93 | 26 | 119 |
| K4ESE | Unlimited | 90 | 26 | 116 |
| K4DGJ | Unlimited | 80 | 22 | 102 |
| W3ZL | Formula | 77 | 23 | 100 |
| WB4ROA | Unlimited | 73 | 20 | 93 |
| N4PQX | Unlimited | 56 | 23 | 79 |
| K8YC | Unlimited | 56 | 22 | 78 |
| WB2RHM | Unlimited | 53 | 21 | 74 |
| AA4SC | Unlimited | 51 | 20 | 71 |

Some entrants are specializing. WB2RHM is all RTTY, K4ESE is all 80 meters, and N4PQX is all 80 and 160, mostly 160.

Item 2: I've been asked to identify the additional entities on the CQ list that aren't on the DXCC entity list. There are seven and here they are:

| <u>Prefix</u> | <u>Country</u> |
|---------------|------------------|
| 4U1V | ITU Vienna |
| GM/S | Shetland Islands |
| G9/IH9 | African Italy |
| IT9 | Sicily |
| JW/B | Bear Island |
| TA1 | European Turkey |
| YU8 | Kosovo |

Item 3: CDXA member W3GQ, Paul, has found a program that many will find useful when filling out the DX Marathon Scoresheet. It's available on the Internet at <http://software.ad1c.us/marathon/>. This is a conversion program that reads an ADIF log created by your logging program and writes a comma-delimited spreadsheet that can be copied and pasted into the DX Marathon Scoresheet. The web site has full details and comprehensive instructions. It's free.

Item 4: Don't forget to send me (w3oa@roadrunner.com) your DX marathon scores as of the last day of each month after your score reaches 100.



A Peek at Hamfest 2009

March 14-15 are the dates for the annual Charlotte Hamfest—2009 Edition. There is a new location for the event this year. It is the Cabarrus Arena & Events Center located at 4751 State Route 49 North, Concord, NC. Directions can be found at the Mecklenburg Amateur Radio Society website or at the Cabarrus Arena website (<http://www.cabarrusarena.com/>).

Forums of interest to DXers will be a presentation by Josh Fisher, W4WJF, on his role in the Willis Island DXpedition, VK9DWX. Also on the docket is a talk by Gregg Marco (W6IZT) on the then recently concluded Desecheo Island DXpedition.

QSL card checking will be done by Gary Dixon, K4MQG, and Bill McDowell, K4CIA.

CDXA will once again hold its Annual Hamfest Banquet. This year's banquet will be at the Texas Land & Cattle Steak House at Exit 49 off I-85. (7779 Lyles Lane, Concord; 704-510-0021) There's sure to be a door prize or two, so don't miss this event. Reservations may be made with Paul Ponak:

pponak@carolina.rr.com

We've heard from the Tennessee group that they'll be here in force, so don't wait too long before deciding you'll attend the banquet. This event has been sold out the past few years.

Not on Logbook of the World, yet?

You say you're not on Logbook of the World yet? What are you waiting for? In the last month LoTW had its 200 Millionth QSO uploaded to the logbook. Surely there are few of your QSOs waiting to be matched up in that number. Okay, you say you've been meaning to learn about it but you just haven't had the time to pour over all that mumble jumble in the documentation. Well, wait no more. ARRL now has an easy to understand PowerPoint tutorial awaiting you on its website. Just start your favorite browser and go to:

<http://www.arrl.org/lotw/start.html>

Once at this site, you'll find an informative presentation explaining how LoTW works, the steps to get started, and how to use the website once you're activated. It couldn't be easier.

Hollingsworth Successor Named

(The following is taken from ARRL Publication ARLB008. — The Editor)

Laura L. Smith of Pennsylvania has been named by the FCC to fill the vacancy created when Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, retired in 2008 as Special Counsel for the Spectrum Enforcement Division of the FCC's Enforcement Bureau. Hollingsworth served in that position for more than 10 years as the FCC's enforcement watchdog over the Amateur Radio Service.

A 1990 graduate of the Pepperdine University School of Law, Smith began her legal career with the FCC, working in the Mass Media Bureau and Wireless Telecommunications Bureau. She also served as Deputy Division Chief of the Public Safety and Private Wireless Division. Smith is currently licensed to practice in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

In 1998, Smith left the FCC to become Executive Director of Governmental Affairs for the Industrial Telecommunications Association (ITA), now Enterprise Wireless Alliance. In that role, she monitored FCC and legislative proceedings and participated in all regulatory proceedings relevant to the private wireless industry. In 2001, Smith became ITA's President and Chief Executive Officer. While in that position, she was instrumental in the formation of the Consensus Group, a group of public safety and private wireless entities responsible for drafting the "Consensus Plan," a proposed resolution for interference in the 800 MHz band; this was adopted by the FCC in 2004.

Smith returns to the FCC after serving Of Counsel with the Maryland law firm of Shulman Rogers. While there, she dealt with telecommunications matters and provided counsel to numerous entities in the private radio and public safety communities. Smith has served as an industry consultant and written columns for a variety of trade publications including Mobile Radio Technology Magazine and The Private Wireless Magazine.

In an October 2008 letter to then FCC Chairman Kevin Martin, ARRL President Joel Harrison, W5ZN, urged Martin to name a successor to Hollingsworth: "The appointment of a replacement Special Counsel in this position is of critical importance to the Amateur Radio Service, as the delay in finalizing the appointment stands to undermine in very short order an exceptionally successful and low-cost program of enforcement in the Amateur Service."

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Calling the FCC's Amateur Radio enforcement program "spectacularly successful," Harrison reminded Martin of the "long period in the late 1980s and 1990s during which the Commission was essentially uninvolved in enforcement in the Amateur Service. The Amateur Service, consisting of some 680,000 licensees of the Commission, is in essence a self-regulating service; however, due to the shared frequency allocations in the Service and the long distance propagation of amateur communications, a very few rule violators can cause severe disruption in the Service. On the other hand, even a minimal Commission presence has a very strong deterrent value."

When Hollingsworth was appointed as Special Counsel for Amateur Radio Enforcement, Harrison said that Hollingsworth "established a visible presence in the Service and very quickly, and with very little investment of Commission resources, using little more than the awareness of an enforcement presence, created strong deterrence against rule violations."

Upon learning of Smith's move to the Amateur Radio enforcement role, Harrison remarked that he was "very pleased to see the Commission move forward with the hiring of a new Special Counsel responsible for enforcement of the Amateur Radio Service rules," said Harrison. "Ever since Riley Hollingsworth announced his retirement, we have met with the Enforcement Chief numerous times and corresponded with FCC Chairman Martin to ensure this position remains intact at FCC. The Commission acknowledges the self-regulating environment we maintain, but also understands that we need their assistance occasionally to resolve a few situations. They have continually reassured us that this is an important matter for them, and Ms. Smith's hiring confirms that."



North Carolina Hams Coordinate Governor's Inauguration Parade

By Gary Pearce, KN4AQ, ARRL NC PIO

(This article is presented to provide you a success story of Amateur Radio in the recent North Carolina gubernatorial inauguration. —The Editor)

On one of the last days of 2008, Kelly Andrews KD4EWG got a call from some people he knows who were working on Governor-elect Bev Perdue's inauguration in Raleigh. "Could you get some of your ham buddies to help us out with logistics?" Uh, that would be in less than two weeks, on Saturday, January 10, with the New Year holiday about to happen. Kelly wasn't able to help, but he passed them on to Tom Brown N4TAB. Tom is Wake County ARES EC (and Central Branch AEC). And he wasn't so sure. Yes, the hams could do it, even on short notice, but did they want to? Hams had been called out for Governor Mike Easley's second inauguration four years earlier, and ended up not doing much. "We'll do it", Tom replied, "if you give us a real job."

We got four jobs: (1) handle seating for the inauguration; (2) coordinate the staging for the parade (66 units, 2200 participants); (3) relay the actual order of parade participants to the TV network broadcasting the parade so they could set up their graphics and scripts; and (4) coordinate the busses that were to pick up the parade participants once they finished. We wouldn't be just shadowing and communicating for the people doing these jobs—we'd be doing them ourselves.

Time to recruit some volunteers! Tom put out the word on ARES mailing lists and Triangle area nets, and got help from Bill Cole, KG4CXY. Bill ran an independent public service group, Carolina Helping Hams (www.hampublicservice.org), and had his own list of volunteers. Between them, they filled the twenty slots they needed and had to turn a few others down.

Tom and Bill met with the Inauguration staff, but got only sketchy information about how things were planned. That's because, with little time to spare, planning hadn't progressed very far. They explained what they could to the ham volunteers on two nets held on the Raleigh 148.88 repeater, but when the hams reported for duty early Saturday morning, they knew where to gather, what frequency to use, and not much else.

VIP seating for the inauguration was the first task. Tom dispatched Bill KG4CXY, Karl K4LNX and Charles WA3UTC to handle that. Virginia NC4VA went along to shadow the parade coordinator. They found that 700 seats had been set up, but 2000 tickets had been sent out. Seating had been divided by group, but there were no seating charts. Somehow they handled it.

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Then Bill, Karl and Charles went to see about the parking lot where the busses would wait to pick up the parade participants as they finished. I monitored the radio traffic on that, and there was trouble! The lot they were told to use had been taken over by the Capital Police. The next lot they were pointed to was filling up with cars from arriving spectators. They closed the lot and saved what space was left, and got ready to direct parade units to their busses. Tom warned that the first parade participants would likely stall and mill around as they exited the route, causing a backup into the active parade, so Karl and Charles would have to hustle them along. And that's what they did. They kept the parade marching an extra two blocks, right up to the busses. Bill left them to their task and became the parade marshal/traffic cop at the starting line.

The rest of the hams were helping at the parade staging area, and things were no better organized there. The plan was for the police department to cordon off several blocks at the south end of downtown Raleigh where the 65 parade units would wait to be lined up. As those groups arrived, the streets were still full of traffic, and the small volunteer parking lot where the parade units checked in was filling up fast. It would never hold the whole parade.

Fortunately, Tom and Bill had identified "Plan B"—two large parking lots adjacent to the check-in area—the day before. Those lots were privately owned, but they were still empty Saturday morning, so Tom sent Phil, AE4PC, John AI4RT and Dick KM4SX over to direct parade traffic into them. Some of the other hams pointed the early arrivals out of the little volunteer lot and over to "Plan B." lot. Alanna, K4AAC, was the traffic cop at the check-in area. Her toughest task was convincing Girl Scout moms to park in a designated lot three blocks away when they wanted to



AI4RT confers with Raleigh PD.

park here.

So now we had two parking lots full of floats, high-school bands, military units, Girl Scouts, clowns and other groups, but they were not lined up in any particular order. Tom asked me to coordinate getting them out of the lots and up to the Wilmington Street starting line, and he gave me a list that showed what order they needed to be in. This was going to be interesting.

I got on the air and called for all available hams to just spread themselves out into the parking lots and adjacent streets. I would call for the parade units in order. The hams would look around, and whoever identified the units I called for would approach them and point them to the exit. KJ4BYN, KI4YXM, K4NGJ, WA2YBM, K4TIF, WD4KSE, KI4FUD and KI4PAE joined AE4PC, AI4RT and KM4SX in the staging area (John AI4RT described it as the cavalry arriving just in time as he was about to give up). The improvised system worked, though the hams had to unsnarl some traffic jams. Everyone was thinking on their feet and solving problems as they arose. It was working.

Almost. The first two units on my list were the Inter-Service Color Guard and the 2nd Division Marine Band from Camp Lejune, and nobody could find either of them. Tom had a brilliant thought—they were probably participating in the Inauguration, which was going on a few blocks away. Virginia confirmed that, and they were soon on their way to the starting line.

The parade began on time, at 12:30PM. Wilmington Street was full from the staging area to the starting line, and about half the parade units were still in the parking lots. I was about to call out more units when our next two crises hit. First, Governor Perdue hadn't arrived at the reviewing stand yet. Could we stop the parade, or at least slow it down? We didn't see how. Fortunately, she appeared before the parade had progressed very far.

Second, there was a separate parade "insertion point" for the politicians and other VIP who would be riding in antique cars. Bob K4RLC was manning that spot, and he reported that the VIPs were arriving way out of order. There was no way to stick to the prepared script. Some of the other parade units were out-of-order, too, because they arrived late.

That scenario was covered. David KF4VXJ was positioned strategically near the start of the parade, and would relay the actual order of participants to Alanna, K4AAC, who was now in the TV truck near the finish line. The problem was that with all the stray RF from the computers in the TV truck, Alanna couldn't hear David, or almost anyone else. As the panic level from the producers was rising, Virginia was moved to the truck, and Alanna stood outside, where she could hear David and relay his reports to Virginia. (See photo, next page.)

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K4AAC operating just outside the UNC-TV control truck, relaying needed information.

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But now *my* anxiety level was rising. Half the parade was still in the parking lot, but the TV-support hams were dominating our radio channel getting their problem solved and reporting parade progress. I couldn't get in a call for more units. Our truncated planning hadn't left time to identify a second frequency and make sure everyone had it programmed and ready for QSY in the event of channel congestion. We were doing everything on a single two-meter simplex frequency. Steve K4WEB was doing his best to keep things moving as Net Control, but I had to plead to get *someone* moved to another channel before the parade developed a big gap in the middle.

David solved the problem by moving the TV crew to a nearby repeater. I was able to resume calling out the parade units, and the parade proceeded, gap-free.

Another part of Tom's plan called for having several hams stationed along the active parade route to look for any trouble. That job went to the Freeze family, father Mark WD4KSE, and twins Clara KI4PAE and Sam KI4FUD. Sam saw a horse throw a shoe, which landed nails-up in the middle of the street, right in front of a marching band. (Earlier in the day, a band leader had complained about being behind horses, but this wasn't what he had in mind). Sam ran out and picked up the shoe. Meanwhile, Mark received a radio call that some VIPs arrived at the "insertion point" late, and we needed to have one of the antique cars circle back to pick them up. He ran the length of the parade route to catch up with the cars and redirect them. Clara's first public-service outing went a little more smoothly, but she said she enjoyed it.

Another ham stationed on the route, Liz KF4UQZ, discovered that a radio and orange vest made you a target for everyone with a problem—public, parade officials, police.

She barely got one question answered or problem solved before another one appeared. "That is what these events are good for, to test your ability to do that under extreme duress. We can all use a lot more of that," she said.

Remember that parking lot that Tom commandeered? Our action didn't go unnoticed (it's hard to hide a couple thousand people, many of them blaring instruments and beating drums, in a lot that wasn't supposed to be used). A lot representative approached Phil AE4PC and asked when they'd get their lot back, as they had an event that evening. Phil explained that we'd be long gone by then, and all was well.

Our group of 20 included four women—Virginia, Alanna, Liz and Tiff. Virginia noted that seemed appropriate, considering that the Inauguration was for the state's first female Governor. Then someone asked her why we didn't have *more* women hams there.

The parking lot emptied; the last officials were "inserted"; the TV broadcast identified almost everyone correctly; the Governor left a little early to join the crew of costumed sports mascots as they cavorted before the reviewing stand (which didn't please some of the participants who didn't get her attention); and a police car brought up the rear of the parade. Bob, K4RLC, and David, KF4VXJ followed that car up the parade route, and Bob reported, "Some groups of parade watchers clapped loudly and laughingly said, 'Hooray for the guys with the radios.'"

The guys (and girls) with the radios were treated to a barbecue lunch before heading home. As far as anyone on Fayetteville Street or watching on TV knew, everything was flawless. The "guys with the radios" had pulled it off.



KG4CXY loses his batons to Wool-E-Bull, but still keeps the parade moving.

The Back Page

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Contest Manager **Dick Williams** (W3OA) gives you the **contest** lowdown....

CDXA now has a new name on the contest robot. (Page 4)

ARRL International DX CW Contest to have enhanced **CW Skimmer** feature. (Page 4)

Neat **club prizes** for "getting on the air" in the ARRL Int'l DX test. (Page 4)

North Carolina QSO Party needs "a few good men". (Page 5)

DX King rundown after the first month of 2009 (Page 6)

Charlotte Hamfest has some good DX Forums and a Great Banquet. Don't miss it! See Page 7.

FCC Appoints successor to Riley Hollingsworth. See Page 7.

Hams assist at **North Carolina's Gubernatorial Inauguration**—in a big way. See page 8.

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